

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
Continuation Sheet**

**AL'S MOTORS, 3910 WILSON BOULEVARD, ARLINGTON COUNTY, VA (000-7381)**

**Section number**   7   **Page**   1  

---

**SUMMARY DESCRIPTION**

Al's Motors is located at 3910 Wilson Boulevard in Ballston, Arlington County, Virginia. The high-style Streamline Moderne automobile dealership with service garage was built in 1948 with a one-story addition constructed at the southwest corner in 1968 (replaced in 2001). The building was designed by architect J. Raymond Mims and constructed by the firm of Roystone, Grimm, and Sammons. Rectangular in plan, the two-story masonry building is sited on a long narrow lot at the southwest corner of Wilson Boulevard and North Pollard Street. The elevations are articulated with varying finishes that correspond to the street frontage and their functions. The primary elevation along the highly traveled Wilson Boulevard has rounded corners, a metal-and-glass curtain wall opening onto the automobile showroom, overhanging aluminum cornice, and red string courses mimicking racing stripes along the parapet. Glass-block sidelights and transom surround the main entry, which is topped by a reeded metal hood extending from the curtain wall's cornice. The secondary elevation along North Pollard Street is finished with a combination of wide red brick coursing and blond brick horizontal stripes. A flat roof covers the northern end of the building and the two-story 2001 addition. A barrel-vaulted roof crowns the southern end of the building, above the service garage. The property was renovated in 2001-2002 for use as a health club.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

Site

Al's Motors is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Wilson Boulevard and North Pollard Street. The property comprises a level lot of .78 acres along the highly traveled commercial corridor of Wilson Boulevard. The commercial crossroads of Ballston is located to the north of the property and the residential community of Ashton Heights is located to the south and southeast. Immature landscaping lines the northeast corner of the property and continues along the north elevation of the building. A paved parking lot runs along the west and south elevations, while street parking lines the east elevation. No outbuildings or associated structures are located on the property.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
Continuation Sheet**

**AL'S MOTORS, 3910 WILSON BOULEVARD, ARLINGTON COUNTY, VA (000-7381)**

**Section number**   7   **Page**   2  

---

Exterior

Constructed in 1948 with an addition in 1968, the two-story, masonry building is set on a poured concrete foundation. A flat roof crowns the main block of the building and rear addition, while the service garage at rear is covered with a barrel-vaulted roof.

The two-story, primary elevation (north) along Wilson Boulevard is clad at the base with pre-cast concrete panels set with mortar. The panels, which step up at the west end, feature exposed aggregate. A one-and-one-half-story aluminum-and-plate glass curtain wall wraps around the curved ends of the façade to the side elevations. An overhanging aluminum cornice with copper flashing caps the curtain wall, wrapping around the rounded corners of the building. The upper portion of the facade is clad with pre-cast concrete panels of exposed aggregate. The rectangular concrete panels are accented at the top by two red string courses. The double-leaf, plate glass entry door is set within an aluminum frame at the center of the façade. Projecting sidelights and flush transom of glass blocks flank the opening, which is capped by a reeded aluminum hood. The rounded corners of the hood align with the metal cornice of the curtain wall. The illuminated "Al's Motor's" sign centered over the entrance was replaced during recent renovations with an illuminated "Gold's Gym" sign.

The two-story, secondary elevation (east) fronts North Pollard Street. This elevation is divided into three distinct sections that correspond to the original uses of the building. The northeastern section of the building housed the automobile showroom, and is a continuation of the Streamline Moderne ornamentation presented on the facade. This includes the aluminum-and-plate glass curtain wall, overhanging, aluminum cornice, red string courses, and parapet wall. A single recessed entry opening into the showroom is located at the southern end. The single-leaf door, accessed by a concrete path and single step, holds a flush-metal replacement door. An aluminum hood with rounded corners projects over the entry.

The second section of the east elevation, formerly housing the business offices, is clad in brick laid in six-course American bond. The brick wall is patterned with wide, horizontal stripes of blond brick within red brick. The red brick, pierced by eight unequally spaced openings, reads as a single horizontal band. A cast stone string course runs under the red-brick bands, also serving as a continuous sill for the window

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
Continuation Sheet**

**AL'S MOTORS, 3910 WILSON BOULEVARD, ARLINGTON COUNTY, VA (000-7381)**

**Section number** 7 **Page** 3

---

openings. The openings on the first and second stories hold metal industrial windows, each consisting of three-light fixed panes flanked by operable three-light casements and a three-light fixed transom. The window in the third bay of the first story holds three casements with a one-light transom. The southern bay of the first story has a single-leaf flush metal door with one light. The second-story window above the entry has two operable casements with three lights each and a two-light transom. All of the window openings have steel lintels.

The third section of the east elevation, formerly the service garage, is one story in height with a stepped parapet. The change in the level of ornamentation and height indicates the change in use. This section is clad in brick laid in six-course American bond. The horizontally massed red-brick cladding and the industrial windows are flanked at the top and bottom by blond brick courses. String courses of cast stone trim the red-brick band at the base and top, serving as a continuous sill and lintel. Each of the nine tripartite metal windows consists of fixed, hopper, and awning lights. A single-leaf entry opening was created during the recent renovation in the southernmost section of the first window bay. The entry has a plate glass door with a one-light transom set in a metal frame. Poured concrete, side-entry steps access the door. The eighth window bay from the south corner was converted from an overhead vehicular opening to a window opening during the recent renovations; thus, its lintel is lower than the other openings.

The south and west elevations are viewed as tertiary, reflecting the building's dual function as an automobile service garage. One story in height with a barrel-vaulted roof, the garage is constructed of red brick laid in six-course American bond. The south elevation comprises the rear of the former garage. The elevation is pierced by three large openings with patterned glass block and cast stone sills. A four-light, fixed metal window that replaced a louvered opening for an exhaust fan is centered on the vaulted end of the elevation.

To the west of the garage is the 2001 addition. It is constructed of red brick laid in six-course American bond. This addition replaces the 1948 rectangular wing, which was enlarged in 1968 to allow for a separate paint area. The south elevation has no openings. A single-leaf flush metal door accessed by a metal stair pierces the north elevation of the new addition.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
Continuation Sheet**

**AL'S MOTORS, 3910 WILSON BOULEVARD, ARLINGTON COUNTY, VA (000-7381)**

**Section number   7   Page   4**

---

Similar to the east elevation along North Pollard Street, the west elevation of the main block is divided into three distinct sections that correspond to the building's use – showroom, parts department, and garage. The showroom on the west elevation is a continuation of the Streamline Moderne ornamentation presented on the facade. This includes the aluminum-and-plate glass curtain wall, overhanging, aluminum cornice, red string courses, and parapet wall.

The center section of the west elevation, formerly the parts department, is constructed of red brick laid in six-course American bond. Primarily symmetrically massed, the two-story section is pierced by industrial windows. The window openings, with awning and casement lights, have cast stone sills and steel lintels. A single-leaf entry door is located in the northernmost bay of the service garage. Framed by a wide metal surround, the recessed opening has a one-light flush metal door accessed by a concrete step. The southernmost bay, reading as a hyphen to the one-story service garage, has been recently altered. The large opening now holds an aluminum-and-glass curtain wall with a central double-leaf plate glass door. The second story window openings on the west elevation are generally smaller than those piercing the first story. Moving north to south, second-story openings consist of a single twelve-light metal awning window, two larger windows each with three six-light awnings and a nine-light transom, a double-leaf entry opening, and three six-light metal awning windows. The double-leaf entry, presently without exterior access, holds paneled wood doors.

A single-leaf door opening and five industrial window openings pierce the garage portion of the building, which projects the depth of a single bay from the main block. Each of the four tripartite metal windows consists of fixed, hopper, and awning lights, cast stone sills, and steel lintels. The recent renovation involved altering the southernmost bay of this elevation from an overhead vehicular door to a single-leaf door opening with a one-light flush metal door. Further, the northernmost opening was converted from an overhead vehicular opening to a window opening; thus, neither the sill nor the lintel aligns with the other four openings. The cornice consists of two stepped header courses of brick.

**Interior**

The northern section of the building, formerly the automobile showroom, is an open, double-height space with a starburst-patterned terrazzo floor. The walls are painted masonry. The southernmost section of the

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
Continuation Sheet**

**AL'S MOTORS, 3910 WILSON BOULEVARD, ARLINGTON COUNTY, VA (000-7381)**

**Section number**   7   **Page**   5  

---

wall is finished with drywall. The ceiling is painted steel decking supported by steel trusses. An interior door on the east end of the south wall opens to an enclosed concrete, straight-flight stair that leads to a second floor. A cased opening in the west end of the south wall leads to a corridor that provides the circulation to the rear of the building. The corridor is finished with drywall and has a vinyl tile floor. To the east of the corridor are rooms containing the women's fitness room and the sports medicine clinic. These rooms are finished with carpeted floors, drywall partitions, and painted exposed ceilings. To the west, massage and tanning rooms, storage areas, and restrooms run along the corridor. Accessed by a stair from the northern section of the building or from the main lobby to the south, the men's and women's locker rooms are located on the second floor above this area. They are finished with stained concrete floors, painted drywall partitions, and painted ceilings with exposed steel trusses.

Moving south in plan, through the corridor, the main lobby of the gym is located in the northern end of the former service garage. Offices line the east end of the north wall of the lobby, while a juice bar is sited at the west end. The lobby is finished with wood laminate flooring, exposed masonry walls, and an exposed ceiling of steel trusses.

Beyond the lobby, the former service garage has been split into two levels. An enclosed stair at the south edge of the lobby leads down to a large open workout room with rubber flooring and an exposed ceiling of steel trusses. A second stair from the lobby leads to the second-floor workout room. The northern end of this area is defined by a metal railing with mesh panels. The concrete slab floor is stained, the masonry walls are painted, and the original open garage ceiling is visible in this room. An aerobics room, constructed with drywall partitions, is located in the southeast corner of this space. This room has a wood laminate floor and painted walls.

The 2001 addition at the southwest corner of the building, which replaced the 1948 wing and 1968 addition, is divided into two floors, with a fitness room at the first and an aerobics room on the second. The fitness room has rubber flooring, while the aerobics room is carpeted. Both have exposed ceilings constructed of steel trusses.